# Specification for Patent Application

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| TITLE | Method and Apparatus for Promoting Play on a Network |
| APPLICANT | IGT |
| COUNTRY | Australia |
| TYPE | Divisional |
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# METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROMOTING PLAY ON A NETWORK OF GAMING DEVICES

## Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to gaming devices, such as electronic slot
5    machines, and more particularly to a method and apparatus for promoting play
on a network of gaming devices.

Throughout this specification, unless the context requires otherwise, the word
"comprise", or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be understood
to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or group of integers but not the
10    exclusion of any other integer or group of integers.

## Background Art

The following discussion of the background art is intended to facilitate an
understanding of the present invention only. It should be appreciated that the
discussion is not an acknowledgement or admission that any of the material
referred to was part of the common general knowledge in Australia as at the
15    priority date of the application.

Linking together electronic slot machines on a computer network is known in the
art. One example of such a network is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,752,882 to
Acres et al. ("the '882 patent"), which is assigned to the applicant of the present
20    application. The '882 patent is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.
The '882 patent also discloses a number of different bonuses, which pay
awards to players at their respective slot machines that are over and above any
awards dictated by the pay tables of the machines.

One such bonus award is paid randomly to one of the players via that player's
25    slot machine. Once a slot machine is selected for this type of award, a computer

**Abstract**

A method and system for providing incentive to a player to play gaming devices (612, 614, 616, 618, 620) connected by a network to a host computer is described. A player account is created and stored in an accounting system (638) forming part of the host computer. A player-tracking card (666) forming part of a player-tracking means is provided to players of the gaming devices to identify them and invoke their corresponding player account via a gaming device. Each gaming device is associated with a machine communication interface (MCI) (650), a card reader (660) forming the other part of the player-tracking means and a processor (652) for receiving player commands to invoke the player account. The player account includes player credits and player points, which are transferable between the accounting system (638) and a particular gaming device. A prescribed number of credits are debited from player credits transferred to the MCI and credited to the gaming device in response to player wagering activity and vice versa upon receiving another command to cease player account activity. Player points are accrued relative to the level of player play on the gaming devices and a convertible to credits responsive to a conversion command provided by a player at a gaming device.